

HABS  
MO  
11-SAJOG  
1-

CITY HALL  
11th & Frederick Avenue  
St. Joseph  
Buchanan County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-250

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

NAME: City Hall

LOCATION: 11th & Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri 64501. City Hall faces Frederick Avenue on the North and is bounded by 12th Street on the East, Francis Street on the South and 10th Street on the West.

PRESENT OWNER: City of St. Joseph, Missouri

PRESENT OCCUPANT: City of St. Joseph, Missouri

PRESENT USE: Official use for city business.

SIGNIFICANCE: At the time of it's dedication a newspaper editorial said, "St. Joseph has waited a long time for it's new City Hall, but we are convinced it was well worth waiting for; of striking beauty and dignity, the structure, as designed, is impressive and will be a real addition to the artistic resources of the city and state and an example of what can be done to make a modern place of public utility something fine. It is in line with the present day tendency to erect buildings which are primarily for practical service, yet beautiful in design and decoration."

## PART I.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. On August 18, 1922 Mayor George McIninch had appointed a committee to select the site for a new city hall. On 11/9/22 the committee members recommended that the City Council and the Park Board proceed to make definite arrangements for the establishment of a Civic Center in the Smith Park district and that the new City Hall be located as a part of that Center.

The Corner stone was laid May 27, 1926.

The new City Hall started to be built in 1924 and was completed in 1927. The dedication date was July 7, 1927.

2. The Architects were Eckel and Aldrich.

3. The builder was Lehr Construction Company

4. Permanency and art were uppermost in the minds of the Architects, Eckel and Aldrich. They wanted to give St. Joseph a style of building that would survive more than 100 years, if necessary, and be suitable for the future as well as the present. The detail of the exterior of the building, in Italian Renaissance, was studied from Palazzo Gireau (Rome, 1506) and Palazzo Cancellaria (Rome, 1508) both designed by Bramante Lazzari, and the entrance lobby from the entrance lobby of the Palazzo Farnese, built in 1547 by Michelangelo Buonarroti for Pope Paul III, a member of the Farnese family of Florence.

5. There have been no changes made in the building since it's erection.

## B. Historical Context

The City Hall was designed for city use and that has been what it has been used for since it's erection. The only exception being the use of the fourth floor for the Boy and Girl Scouts.

## PART II.

### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

#### A. Description of Exterior

Details of the exterior were studied from the Palazzo Girard, Palazzo Cancellaria and Palazzo Farnese. Both exterior and interior were studied from what are considered the best precedents of the Italian Renaissance. The exterior design consists of a center mass floaked by end pavilions, the ground floor forming an architectural base, the two upper stories being combined in design to give importance and dignity. On the south, the center portion between the end pavillions is arcaded with an open loggia. The center portion of the building will have an attic or third story. The complete design with the terraces, etc., is one of dignity, refinement and beauty. The building is of class A fireproof construction, the exterior being of Bedford stone.

The dimensions of the first through third floors is 195' 12 3/4" east and west by 77' 8" north and south, with the dimensions of the fourth floor being 119' east and west and 61' 9" north and south.

#### B. Description of Interior

The basement houses the Maintenance Department, Storage Area and a vault.

The first floor is used for offices of Personnel, Finance and an Action Center.

The second floor houses Public Works, Zoning and Planning, the Liquor Inspector, Health Department and a Lunch Room.

The third floor is for the legislative and executive departments. This floor houses the Mayor's offices, the Council Chambers, the City Clerks Office, the City Administrator's office and the Legal Department.

The Mayor's office is finished with mahogany paneling on the walls and the floor is in quarter sawed oak. The furniture is mahogany as well.

The Finance Department is like a large bank, with each Department having it's own vault.

#### C. City Hall sits on a two block Civic Center Park. The City Hall sits on the north side of the park facing Frederick Avenue on the North and Francis Street on the South. The Park is landscaped with trees, shrubery, a war memorial on the west and a fountain on the east.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. The Architectural drawings of our city hall are being held by a local architectural company named Brooner and Brooner.

B. Attached see exhibit #2 for early views of our city hall.

C. Bibliography

1. Primary Sources

a. Library

b. Public records at city hall

2. Secondary sources

a. The Historical Society

D. I am not aware of any other sources to investigate at this time.

E. Supplemental Material, please find attached:

SEE  
FIELD  
RECORDS

Exhibit #1 - Aerial View of the City Hall

Exhibit #2 - Architecture and Design Booklet July 1940

Exhibit #3 - Board of Public Works Minutes

Exhibit #4 - Edit from a newspaper article by the St. Joseph News-Press dated May 9, 1925

Exhibit #5 - Article by Virginia Griffin St. Joseph Landmarks Serie

Exhibit #6 - Copies of Ordinances 1924 - 1928

Exhibit #7 - News paper articles

Exhibit #8 - Copy of a Program presented at the Dedication ceremoni for the new City Hall

PREPARED BY PATRICIA LAWSON